

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN ON THE AEGEAN

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN IN MAY 2
"WASHINGTON POST," DATELINED ATHENS:

1. BEGIN TEXT. THE FLASH POINT IS CLOSER IN THE DISPUTE
BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY OVER TERRITORIAL RIGHTS IN THE
FABLED AEGEAN SEA, A FAR MORE DANGEROUS POINT OF CONTENTION
THAN CYPRUS BETWEEN THE ONCE-ALLIED NATO MEMBERS, AND
GREECE IS SENDING AN URGENTSOS TO THE UNITED STATES.

2. THAT FLASH POINT HAS COME HAIR-TRIGGER CLOSE IN THE
PAST TWO YEARS. NOW, WITH TURKEY PREPARING ANOTHER OIL
EXPLORATION IN THE AEGEAN AND WITH GREECE ILLEGALLY CON-
TINUING TO STRENGTHEN MILITARY DEFENSES ON ITS KEY AEGEAN
ISLANDS CLOSE TO THE TURKISH MAINLAND, CONFLICT MAY BE
UNAVOIDABLE.

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3. ADDING TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S MISERIES HERE IS THE COM-
PLAINT PRIVATELY VOICED BY TOP LEADERS THAT, APART FROM THE
AEGEAN, THE UNITED STATES IS FAILING TO ASSERT ITS ROLE
AS LEADER OF THE WESTERN ALLIANCE JUST AS THE SOVIET
UNION IS MOVING INTO A NEW PHASE OF EXPANSIONISM. "WHAT
IS U.S. POLICY IN AFRICA?" A POLITICAL LEADER ASKED.
"WHILE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES ARE TAKING PLACE UNDER THE DI-

RECTION OF THE SOVIETS, OPERATING IN THE OPEN WITHOUT COVER
WE DON'T SEE THE U.S. DOING ANYTHING."

4. BOTH SIDES IN THE ANKARA AND ATHENS CAMP HAVE HARSH
WORDS FOR THE UNITED STATES AND JIMMY CARTER (THE ONLY
THING THEY AGREE ON), BUT THE HARSHEST COMES FROM THE GREEK
GOVERNMENT OF PREMIER CONSTANTINE CARAMANLIS. BEHIND THE
CRITICISM LIE SEVEN LONG YEARS OF MILITARY DICTATORSHIP
THAT POISONED THE REPUTATION OF THE UNITED STATES FOR ALL
GREEKS, FROM THE MAN IN THE STREET TO THE MEN LIKE CARAMAN-
LIS, GEORGE RALLIS, GEORGE MAVROS AND OTHERS WHO BRILLIANTLY
RESTORED DEMOCRACY IN 1974.

5. THE NIXON-AGNEW YEARS STILL EXUDE A LINGERING STINK
HERE FOR WHICH CARTER IS UNFAIRLY PAYING A HEAVY PRICE.
DURING THE DICTATORSHIP THE COLONELS WHO RUTHLESSLY RAN
GREECE WITH TORTURE AND OTHER TOTALITARIAN TRAPPINGS WERE
COURTED BY THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION FOR WHAT TURNED INTO
EPHEMERAL MILITARY GAINS--MAINLY THE RIGHT TO HOMEPART THE
SIXTH FLEET.

6. LESS THAN THREE YEARS LATER, THE UNITED STATES IS NOT
WELCOME FOR ANY HOMEPARTING AND GREECE IS OUT OF NATO'S
MILITARY ORGANIZATION. WORSE, CONTINUING AMBIVALENCE OF
THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION OVER THE CYPRUS DISPUTE IS RE-
HABILITATING ANTI-AMERICANISM.

7. THE LATEST CASE IN POINT IS CARTER'S HALF-A-LOAF
GESTURE IN FAVOR OF THE U.S.-TURKEY DEFENSE COOPERATION
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PACT. THE GESTURE FAILED TO MOLLIFY TURKEY AND ANGERED
GREECE.

8. "THAT WAS NOT WHAT WE THOUGHT WOULD HAPPEN," A GREEK
CABINET MEMBER TOLD US. "CARTER PROMISED THIS AND CARTER
PROMISED THAT, BUT NOW INSTEAD OF ACTING IN A MORAL AND
PRINCIPLED WAY HE IS ACTING LIKE A TECHNOCRAT, PLAYING WITH
WORDS."

9. THE ANGER IN THAT REMARK CONCEALS A FEAR THAT AFTER 55
YEARS OF QUIET, TURKEY IS BECOMING EXPANSIONIST AND THE
UNITED STATES CANNOT ASSERT ITS POWER OR ITS PREEMINENCE
IN THE WESTERN ALLIANCE TO DEAL WITH IT, JUST AS IT DID NOT
DEAL CORRECTLY WITH THE GREEK DICTATORSHIP. "I TELL YOU
FRANKLY I AM AFRAID OF A NEW PERIOD OF TURKISH EXPANSION;"
DEFENSE MINISTER EVANGELOS AVEROFF TOLD US IN AN INTERVIEW.
"I KNOW OUR REAL DANGER IS FROM THE NORTH (RUSSIA) AND THAT
COLLABORATION WITH TURKEY IS ESSENTIAL FOR US BOTH, BUT
YOUR GOVERNMENT CANNOT DECIDE WHAT TO DO."

10. IN SEPTEMBER 1975 GREECE REACTED TO A MINOR TURKISH INCURSION AGAINST A TINY GREEK ISLE NAMED RO TWO MILES OFF THE TURKISH COAST IN A WAY THAT MIGHT EASILY HAVE FLAMED INTO SHOOTING WAR. THE UNTOLD STORY BEARS TELLING NOW AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT MAY LIE AHEAD.

11. RO WAS TEMPORARILY LEFT UNINHABITED BY AN ILLNESS IN THE SINGLE FAMILY LIVING ON IT. SOON THEREAFTER, THE GREEK FLAG FLYING FROM THE ISLAND'S ONE FLAGSTAFF WAS REPLACED AT NIGHT BY A TURKISH FLAG. A GREEK GUNBOAT RESTORED THE GREEK FLAG AND ATHENS PROTESTED VIGOROUSLY TO ANKARA.

12. WHEN THE TURKISH FLAG WAS AGAIN RAISED SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER, THE GREEK GOVERNMENT SECRETLY SENT OFFICERS TO HIDE THEMSELVES IN A CAVE ON THE ISLAND WITH ORDERS TO SHOOT IF NECESSARY TO PREVENT A RECURRENCE. THE TURKISH GOVERN-
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MENT WAS NOT FOREWARNED. AS IT TURNED OUT, NOTHING HAPPENED. IF IT HAD, THE TWO NATO ALLIES WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE EXCHANGED SHOTS, WITH QUICK-TEMPERED ESCALATION A PROBABILITY.

13. "HOW CAN WAR COME?" ASKED THE GREEK OFFICIAL WHO REVEALED THAT STORY. "THAT IS HOW."

14. JUST AS IT IS DOING IN TURKEY, THE SOVIET UNION IS DOING WHAT IT CAN HERE TO EXPLOIT THE FRAYED U.S. CONNECTION, WITH A MONTHLY POLITICAL-OPERATION INVESTMENT OF DOLS 2 MILLION OR MORE, PARTLY FINANCED BY A RAKE-OFF TAX ON GREEK EXPORTS TO THE SOVIET UNION.

15. BUT THERE IS NOTHING NEW IN THAT. WHAT IS NEW IS THE SUSPICION, AT A MOMENT OF REAL CRISIS HERE, THAT THE UNITED STATES IS ON TRIAL FOR FAILING IN LEADING THE ALLIANCE, A SUSPICION PLANTED DURING THE TWO PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATIONS BUT ONE THAT JIMMY CARTER HAS DONE NOTHING TO LESSEN. END TEXT.
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